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**THE
SPINECHILLER
Collection**

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OUR HAUNTED WORLD
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The Money Pit

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CAMP COLBY



Jake stood grinning in the warm, early morning sunshine. He really liked the first day of camp, and he really liked Camp Colby. This would be his second summer here. Nestled on the shores of a crystal-clear lake high in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Camp Colby had everything. There was horse riding, sailing, hiking, and plenty of other activities. Jake wanted to do everything.

"Hey, Jake!" a young voice called.

He turned around and squinted at somebody running in his direction.

"Eddie!" Jake shouted back, recognising his friend from the year before.

Eddie skidded to a stop on the gravel path. "Did you just get here? What cabin are you in?"

"Red Wing," Jake answered.

"Wow. Me too. Come on, I'll introduce you to everyone."

Jake followed his chattering friend up the steep path to the woodland cabin. It was as great as Eddie had said it was. It had a raised porch in front with a rough string hammock tied between two posts. Inside were six comfortable bunk beds, and plenty of room for everyone's gear. One by one his cabin mates, Adam, Charles, and Scott, introduced themselves to Jake.

"And I'm Tim," a slightly deeper voice boomed from behind Jake. "I'll be in charge of you lot. Now, let's go down to the cafeteria for orientation. Then we can start having fun."

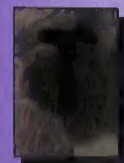


Once everyone was seated at the rows of long wooden tables, Mr Ames, the camp organiser, explained the camp rules. "Finally," Mr Ames announced, "those of you who have been here before know that this was once a mining area. It's been a very long time since the mine has been worked and it is quite deserted. Still, the entrance to the main shaft is open. It can be very dangerous and I don't want any of you to go near it."

Jake noticed that Tim seemed to stiffen a little and looked strangely uncomfortable while Mr Ames was talking.

"Is that clear?" the organiser continued. "That area is out of bounds," he said sternly, then smiled and changed his tone. "Now, let me end by saying welcome to Camp Colby!"

Everyone cheered.



That evening, the kids from Red Wing gathered round a campfire. A full moon sailed overhead. One of the camp cooks, a grisly old

fellow nicknamed Badger, had brought up a supply of hot dogs and marshmallows. He invited himself to join in the feast, and entertained the boys with funny stories that he made up as he went along.

"Can you make up ghost stories, too?" Charles asked, placing his third hot dog on the end of his roasting stick.

Badger was strangely silent for a moment. The smile faded from his weathered old face. "I don't have to make them up. I know things that happen up here... true things... that would send shivers up your spine."

"Well," Adam coaxed, "like what?"

There was another long pause. Only the sound of the crackling fire broke the stillness. "That mine," Badger rasped and pointed to the black mountain-top silhouetted against the moonlit sky. "One hundred years ago it was turning out enough silver to make everyone involved with it very wealthy. But it was a tough mine to work, so the owners paid well to attract the toughest miners." He raised one eyebrow and looked from listener to listener. "They were a rough, rowdy lot... real troublemakers... but good miners, nevertheless. There were plenty of brawls, but the men stuck together.

"Anyway, the owners may have paid well, but they skimmed in another way, on something crucial. They were a lot more concerned with relieving the mine of its silver ore than they were with the safety of the men. Everyone knew it would happen and it finally did."

Badger leaned in close to the wide-eyed boys. "One day the mine just couldn't take any more poking and digging. You could hear the main shaft groaning all the way in town. Then part of it just collapsed – CRASH!"

"What happened to the men?" Jake asked.

"No one working in the east tunnel made it out. There were more than two dozen men down there. Some people claim that for days afterwards, you could hear the sound of their cries from deep inside the belly of the mine. Some people say that on a still night like tonight, if you listen really hard, you can still hear the victims of the disaster moaning to be set free."

"Wow!" Jake gasped. "Didn't anybody try to help them?"

"No." The harsh sound of Tim's voice startled the kids. The flickering of flames cast eerie shadows across his face as he spoke. "They just left them there... said it was impossible to reach them. I suppose that if the vein of silver hadn't been running out, they might have found a way."

Eddie stared out into the night towards the abandoned mine. As if on cue, a coyote howled in the distance. "Have you ever heard them moaning?" he asked Badger.

Tim interrupted. "No one has heard them moaning. It's just the sound of the wind in the empty tunnels." He gave Badger a stony look. "The dangers are very real – not supernatural."

That night, as the boys in Red Wing prepared for bed, Scott asked Tim how he knew so much about the mine and why he seemed so angry about it.

"I hate to admit it," Tim said, "but last year I decided to find out about the mine for myself. So I did a little exploring. I got

lost and couldn't find the main entrance. It was just luck that I found another way out."

"Weren't you scared?" Adam asked him.

"Of course. The wind really does howl up there. But it's just the wind. That's all. I got a few bumps and bruises, but everything turned out OK. Being in there made me really curious about what had happened to the miners, so afterwards I read up on the disaster. It was a terrible thing for those men to have been deserted the way they were. They must have died horribly." A dark look crept over Tim's face for a moment, then disappeared. "Look, I'll tell you what. Tomorrow we can all go for a hike up the mountain and I'll show you the main entrance."

Charles shook his head. "Couldn't we get in trouble for that?"

"Don't worry," Tim assured him. "We'll just take a look and come back. Aren't you curious? Besides, you'll be with me, and I know that mine better than anybody."

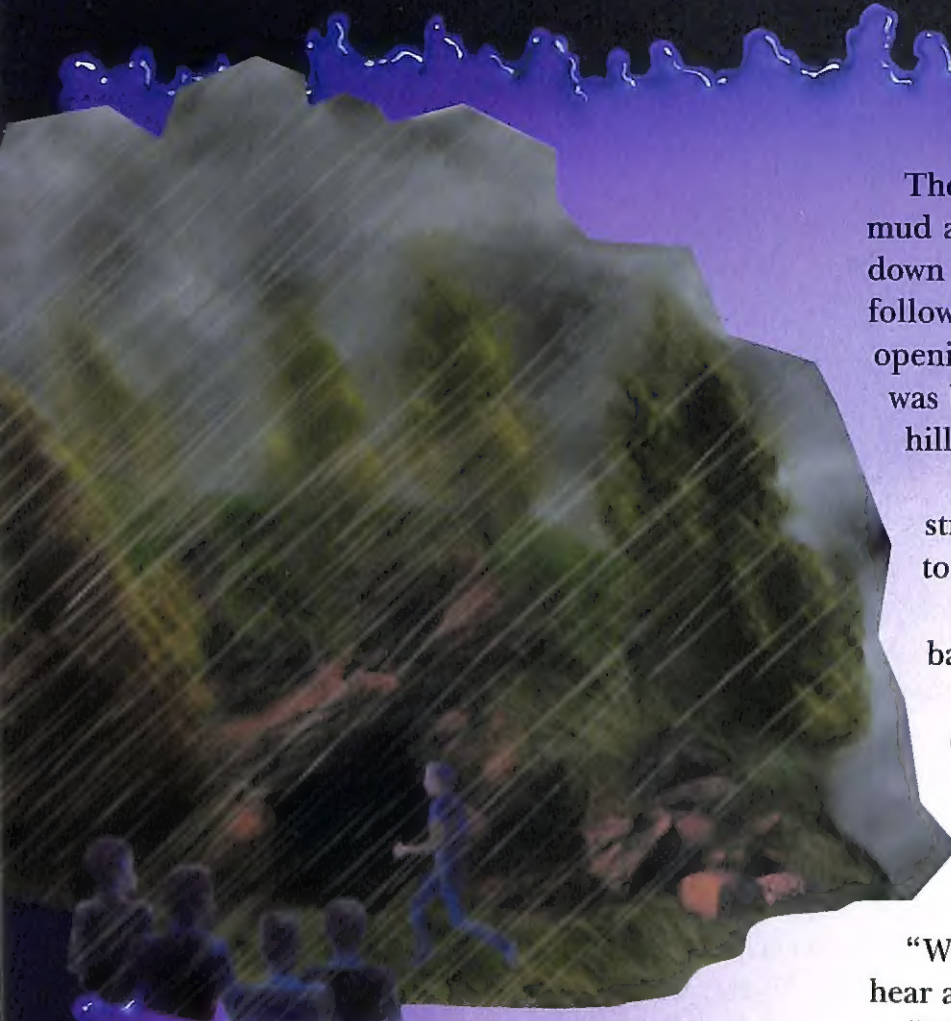
"Sure," Jake agreed. "What could happen?"



The following morning was drab and overcast. During the first part of the hike a crisp wind picked up and the tops of the tallest pines were nodding up and down.

"The sky is really dark over there," Eddie pointed to the west. "It looks like a storm is heading this way. Maybe we should go back."

"No," Tim said confidently. "It'll probably just blow over. It happens all the time up here. We're almost there now."



The soil was rapidly turning to thick mud as rivulets of rushing water cascaded down the trail. The boys struggled to follow Tim. Through the deluge, the opening to the mine loomed into view. It was black as coal and seemed to scar the hillside.

"In there?" Scott hollered as water streamed down his face. "You want us to go in there?"

"It's the safest place," Tim barked back. "I'm going in."

Another sudden bolt of lightning convinced everyone else to follow.

Jake pulled out his torch and looked around at the tunnel. "This is really creepy," he said.

Scott jumped. "Did you hear that?" "What?" Charles muttered. "I didn't hear any..."

"Wait!" Jake cautioned. "Listen."

There was a slight rumbling sound overhead. It was getting louder.

"Get back!" Jake bellowed. The unstable, rain-sodden dirt and rock over the mine entrance gave way. The boys leaped away from the opening just in time before tons of debris quickly piled up, trapping them inside.

When the movement stopped, Jake shone his torch on the entrance. The boulders were far too big to move. The boys simply gazed at it, dumbfounded.

"What are we going to do?" Adam whispered. "Nobody knows we're up here. We're never going to get out."

A second torch beam flared to life. This time, it was Tim's.

"Don't worry," he said calmly. "Remember what I told you? I've been here before. I know another way out. We just have to follow the old mine car tracks."

Within minutes, heavy drops of rain began to splat on the trail around them. Jake pulled a worn baseball cap out of his pocket and slipped it on his head. "I think Eddie is right," he said. "We don't want to get caught out here in a storm." As if in agreement, the sky lit up slightly. The lightning was followed by an ominous roll of thunder. "If we turn back now, we might make it back to camp before it hits."

But nature had something else in mind. All at once a blazing flash of lightning sizzled directly overhead and a clap of thunder boomed like a cannon. The rain escalated to a downpour.

"Now what?" Charles shouted to be heard above the fury.

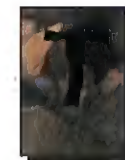
"We have to take cover," Tim answered, trying to sound calm. He looked around. "The closest place is the mine. We'll be safe there."

He pointed the beam at a pair of iron rails that had been used to move the mining cars loaded with ore.

The boys started to follow, when an unearthly moan sounded from somewhere deeper in the tunnel.

"What on Earth is that noise?" Scott said with a shudder.

"It's just the wind," Tim assured him. "Now let's go."



he tunnel was littered with fallen boulders and timbers that had once been used to support it. The boys had to pick their way along slowly and carefully. Their only weapon against the oily blackness came from the two slim torch beams. Their only guides were the two slender, rusted rails. It seemed that they had walked for nearly half an hour, when suddenly the rails disappeared.

In the circle of light, they could see that this part of the tunnel was partially flooded. The tracks vanished into the stagnant water.

"It's a natural ditch," Tim explained. "It must have got flooded since I was here, but it isn't very wide. The tracks are supported by a trellis." Tim noticed the worried faces of the campers. "The only way across is to walk on the rails. They must be just below the surface." The boys were silent. "Look, guys. We don't have a choice. I'll go first."

"I don't want to do this," Scott wailed. His whole body was shaking.

Jake handed the torch to the terrified boy. "We have to," he soothed. "Come on."

Once again, a mournful groan filled the tunnel. "It's the timbers," Tim said firmly. "Let's go." He stepped on to the slippery rail and started out into the water. One at a time, each boy followed. Jake was last, behind Scott. They were only a few steps out when Scott began to wobble.

"There's something in the water," he cried. "I felt something. It's got my ankle!" Screaming, he lurched forwards into Charles. Both boys toppled into the murky water. Jake watched in horror as they seemed to be sucked under by some force. The torch glowed underwater just long enough for Jake to be certain that he saw three flailing figures, not two. Then it went out and the splashing stopped.

"Do something!" he yelled at Tim. "We've got to help them!"

"There's nothing we can do," Tim said, almost without feeling. "Keep going. It's your only chance!"



Slipping and sliding, the youngsters sloshed forwards along the ghastly pool.

"We made it!" Adam wheezed as they tumbled onto the soggy tunnel floor.

"Don't stop now," Tim ordered.

Eddie stayed on the ground. "What about Scott and Charles?"

"We can't help them," the older boy snapped. "We've got to save ourselves."

Tim headed down the tunnel. Reluctantly Adam followed, then Jake. Eddie was close behind. To keep from going crazy with fear, Jake listened to the steady crunch of Eddie's footsteps in the gravelly soil. "We will get out," he said to himself over and over again. Then he realised that he no longer heard footsteps behind him.

"Eddie?" Jake called out.

No answer.

Jake turned and called again louder. "EDDIE!" But his friend was gone.



Jake twisted back to see the glow of Tim's torch disappear up ahead. He raced after him. Out of breath, he reeled around the corner into a wide chamber. From somewhere high above, an opening was letting in just enough daylight so that Jake could see that they were no longer alone.

At least two dozen wispy figures stood staring at him.

"What are they?" murmured Adam. He was pressed up against the chamber wall.

Some had horrible gashes all over their ghostly bodies. They looked like wounds

that might have been suffered as an ageing, unsafe tunnel crumbled in on them, crushing their frail, human forms. Others were almost unmarked. The remnants of tattered flesh on their hands, however, was probably the result of uselessly trying to dig a way out of their grave a century before. Somehow, some hideous part of them had remained.

"What's up, Jake? Cat got your tongue?" Scott stepped out from behind an outcrop of rock. Charles stepped forwards too.

Another voice added, "Don't tell me you aren't glad to see your dear friends?"

"Eddie," Jake whispered.

"You might say that," Eddie answered. He ran his hand over his own chest.



"At least this is Eddie's body. It feels so good to be warm again."

Jake turned his gaze to Tim, who stood smiling down from a ledge leading to the opening above. "Tim, what is happening?"

The older boy peered coldly at Jake and Adam and scowled. "Yes... Tim... it was so fortunate that he wandered in here. His body has been so useful. You see, it is the only way we can get out. We need... vehicles, so to speak. Bodies, to be more accurate. Tim was the first, and now, with this body, we can draw others here. Just as we did with you. Soon we will all be free of this horrible pit."

The phantoms approached as Adam's and Jake's screams of terror filled the dark, dank tunnels.

Tim started to laugh. "Goodbye for now," he said. Then he motioned to Eddie, Scott, and Charles. Together they scrambled out of the opening on to a trail leading back towards camp. The rain had stopped and each of the beings gulped in deep breaths of sweet air. Moments later, what had once been Adam and Jake joined them. They looked at each other with knowing smiles and started back towards Camp Colby to recruit more boys for the next day's hike.

THE END



OUR HAUNTED WORLD



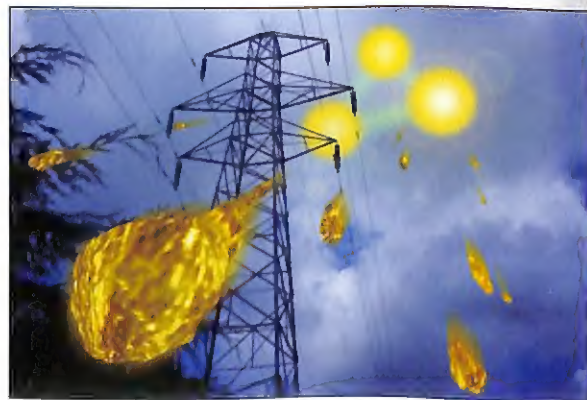
Hungary is a hot-spot for UFOs, hungry vampires and strange voices...



SLIMEBALLS ANONYMOUS

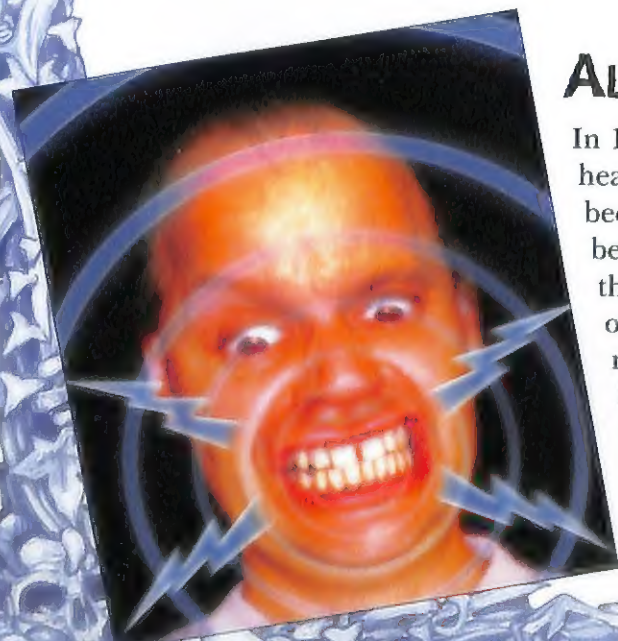
In July 1992, people living in the tiny town of Dombegyhás – in the region around Bekescsaba – were astonished to see three luminous spheres hovering about 6 metres from the ground above some electricity pylons. Dropping out of them, they said, was a yellow, jelly-like substance which seemed to be alive and ‘moving like an amoeba across the ground’. When a man picked up the slime – like the gunge drawn on the photo – it gave off a horrible ‘rotten-eggs’ smell and paralysed his arms.

This was the second mysterious ‘goo’ to land in the area. Earlier, a green-glowing bar of manganese had been found, which was said to be from a metal so pure that it couldn’t have been made on Earth. Frightened locals are blaming unexplained illnesses, and even deaths, in the town on the alien slime.



ALIEN VOICES

In 1997, a man from Budapest started to hear voices in his head day and night. He was convinced that he’d somehow become a channel for the voices of the dead, or that he was being contacted by very chatty aliens! Even worse, he thought that perhaps he’d gone completely crazy, a bit like this man on the left! After weeks of non-stop ‘communications’, the man realised that he was actually transmitting Radio Budapest! A trip to his dentist confirmed that his new false teeth were picking up 24-hour broadcasts. A metal wire was fitted to create a short-circuit and the exhausted man returned to his quiet life.



Countess Bathory (below) did more than most to spread the belief in vampires. ▼



BLOOD COUNTESS

To this day, the ruins of Csejthe Castle in the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains seethes with the horror-filled vibrations of its gory past. In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, it was home to the notorious Countess Bathory. When her husband died in 1604, the countess went mad and began to drink and bathe in the blood of beautiful young girls – because she believed it would keep her looking young! Her servants helped lure young girls to the castle. Some of their bloodless corpses were found by villagers in nearby fields. They thought that vampires were to blame.

Over 650 girls were killed in total and eventually the countess was charged with their murders. Her servants were executed, but the life of the countess was spared. She was walled up in her castle with just one tiny space through which her food was passed. She died after three years, but the four sets of gallows built round the castle were left as a reminder that justice had been done to the murderous Blood Countess. Many say that her ghost lingers there, still longing for one last bloodbath!



CHEF'S SECRET!

A friend of a friend was working his way round Europe as a trainee chef...



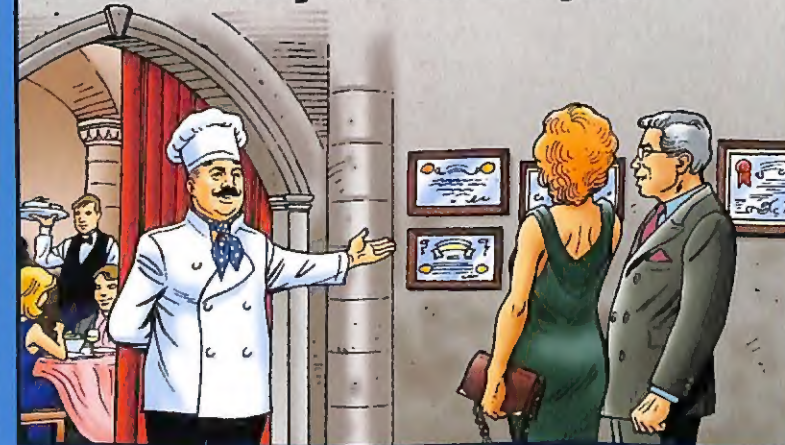
1 He was thrilled to be taken on at a famous restaurant in an impressive castle near Budapest.



3 However, Josef also had an evil temper and the young man was told that he would get rid of trainee chefs on the slightest whim.



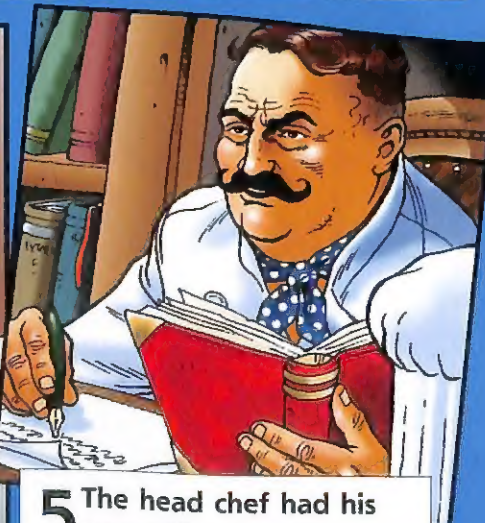
2 The head chef, Josef, had won every prize going. He loved showing off his awards to guests.



4 The young man was anxious to keep his job but he was also keen to learn Josef's cooking secrets. So he watched him closely whenever he could.



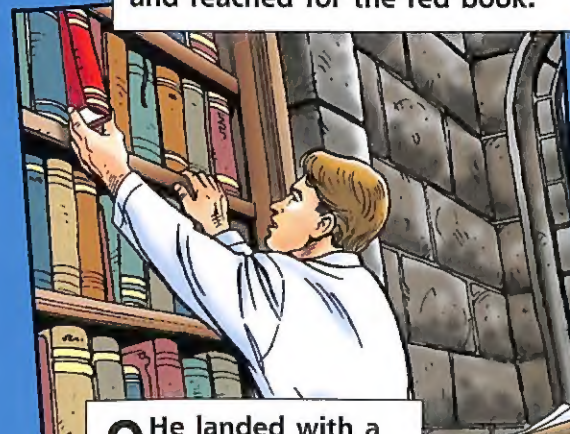
5 The head chef had his own office near the kitchen, where he planned his menus. He stored his cookery books there too, in a big shelf-lined alcove.



6 One day, Josef spotted the young chef peeping round the door. "So! You are after my secrets, yes?" he stormed. "Well, they are all in this big red book – but don't even think about reading it, understand?"



7 The chef was so curious, he sneaked into Josef's office and reached for the red book.



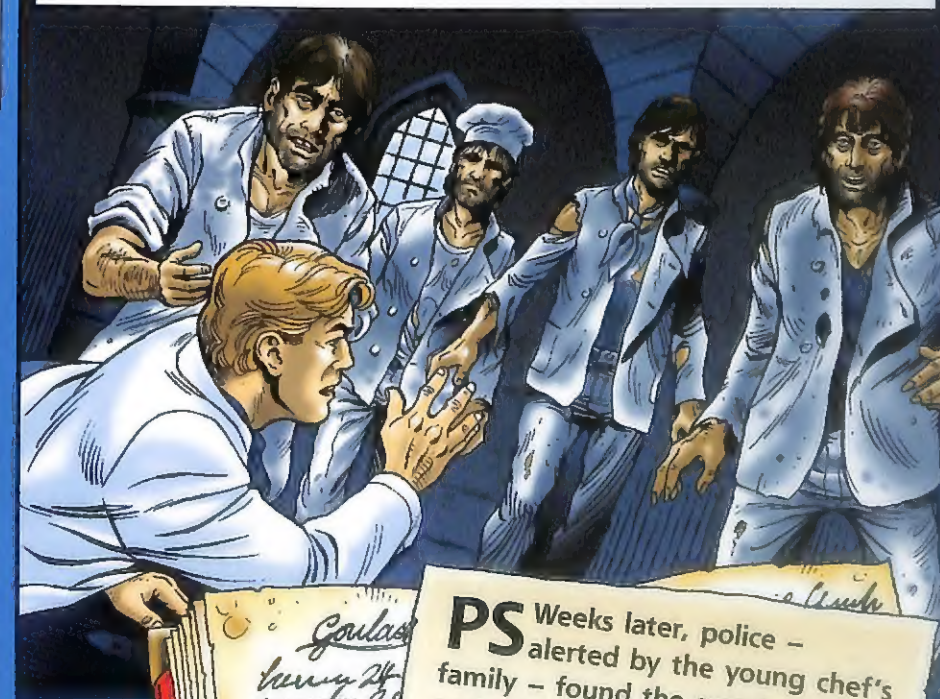
9 He landed with a thud on the stone cellar floor. Then as his eyes adjusted to the near darkness, he realised that he was not alone...



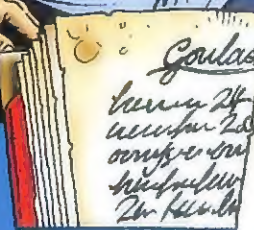
8 As he did so, the whole alcove swung round and he was thrown through a secret doorway into darkness.



10 The skeletal forms of seven half-starved men, still wearing the tattered remains of what had once been chef's uniforms, shuffled closer...



PS Weeks later, police – alerted by the young chef's family – found the secret vault and released the half-dead chefs. Josef was arrested and jailed for many years.





RIDDLE OF THE GREAT PYRAMID

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Great Pyramid is the only Ancient Wonder of the World still standing. It was built about 46 centuries ago next to the two smaller pyramids at Giza, in Egypt. It is 137 metres tall, weighs 6.5 million tonnes and is made up of 2.5 million sandstone blocks!

Centuries have passed, yet the mammoth 'man-made' mountain is still shrouded in mystery. No one knows for sure who built it, how or why! Inside the pyramid, corridors lead to a king's burial chamber and the sarcophagus (the tomb). But would the builders have gone to that much trouble just to bury a king?

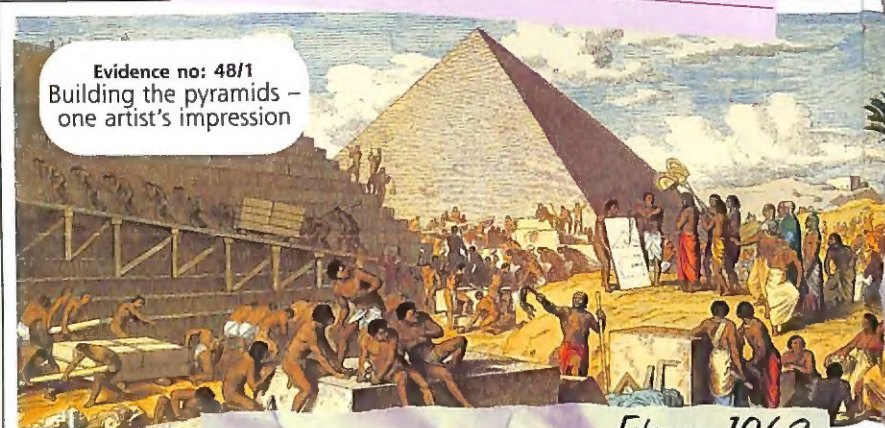
Evidence no: 48/2
The Great Pyramid at Giza

Special Investigation File: 48

Subject: the Great Pyramid
Place: Giza, Egypt

SpineChiller creates a file

Evidence no: 48/1
Building the pyramids – one artist's impression



February 1963

My dear nephew Danny

I have found out some facts and figures to help you with your project. Prepare to be amazed.

The base of the pyramid is big enough to house St Peter's in Rome, the cathedrals in Florence and Milan, and St Paul's and Westminster, in London.

The Great Pyramid weighs twice as much as the Empire State Building in New York. And, if you include all three pyramids at Giza, there would be enough blocks to build a 3m-high wall around France.

Its longest and shortest sides differ by only 20cm, and it is positioned in the absolute centre of the habitable world. You don't get builders like that these days!

Good luck!
Uncle George

Evidence no: 48/5
Astronomer's watch-tower



1977 MYSTERY MAKERS

An argument is raging in Egypt today over who built the Great Pyramid – and how.

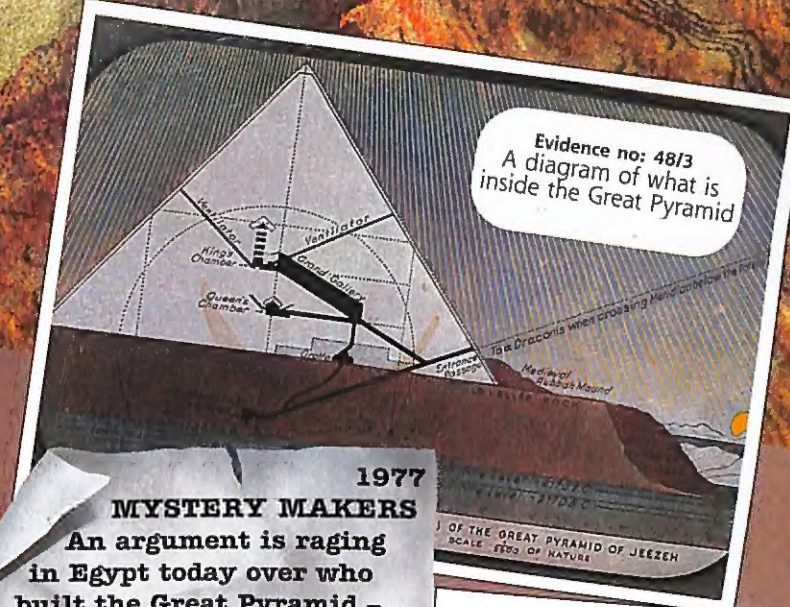
For years, experts have said that no more than 100,000 men built it.

But, in his latest book, Rene Noorbergen states that one million men built it – nearly half the population in Egypt at the time.

Noorbergen also wrote that the builders carted the building blocks down the River Nile in wooden rafts and lifted them up the pyramid with sledges and rollers – using 26 million trees in total!

Academics are not so sure. They think that most of the blocks were cut from local rock, and not shipped at all, then raised up the pyramid on mud-slicked ramps.

Evidence no: 48/3
A diagram of what is inside the Great Pyramid



Evidence no: 48/4
A drawing of the King's burial chamber



INVESTIGATOR'S REPORT

The most likely theory so far is that the Egyptians built the Great Pyramid to bury King Cheops when he died in 2528BC. King Cheops was a mighty ruler and wanted to be buried in the grandest pyramid anyone had ever seen. To make sure, he got his men to start building it about 30 years before his death – so it would be completed in time!

Egyptian kings were buried inside pyramids because the slopes helped their spirits climb to the skies to join the gods, so they believed.

But the Great Pyramid would have had other uses. Experts discovered that it made a perfect sundial for measuring time in days, years and even centuries!

Astronomers found out that it probably served as an astronomical observatory, too. They believe the Egyptians recorded the movements of the stars and planets and formed a calendar from their findings.

Some of the wackier, but less likely, explanations for the Great Pyramid have been that:

- an ancient civilisation built it during enormous floods to provide shelter from the rising waters
- spacemen built it as a beacon for an interplanetary guidance system
- Martians came down to Earth and built the three pyramids to match their own structures on Mars
- it was built as a fortune-telling device. By decoding its measurements, it's possible to predict world events.

CONCLUSION

The Great Pyramid has baffled experts for centuries. One thing is for certain, however. The builders wanted to design something that would stand the test of time. By doing so, they have convinced future generations that they were a highly intelligent bunch – whoever they were!

Unexplained

CLASSIC



SERIAL

Chapter 4

Frankenstein

Retold from a story by Mary Shelley

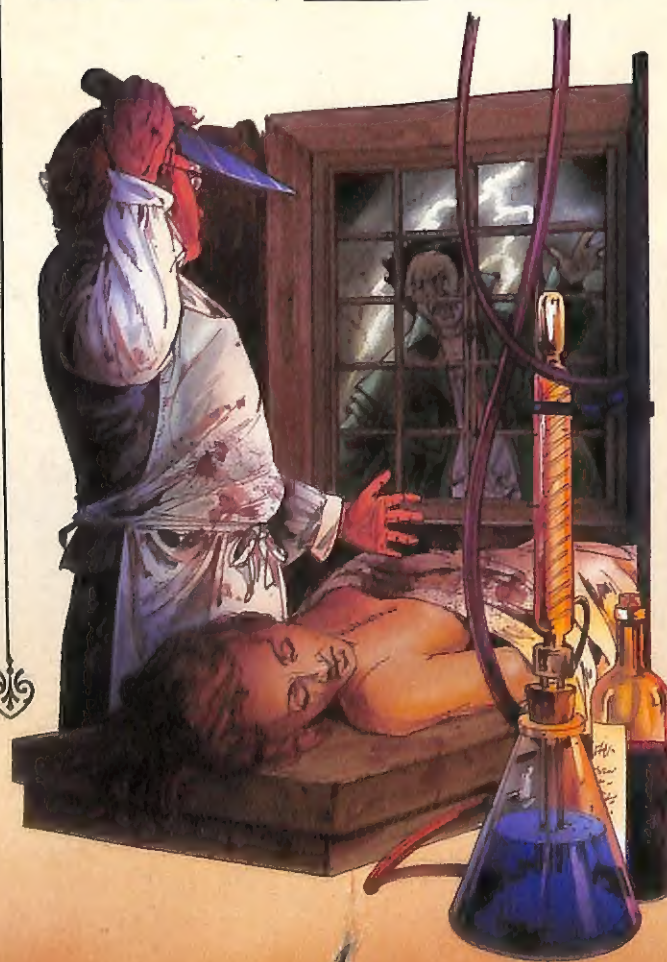
Two days after I had encountered the monster, and with the very heaviest of hearts, I headed for England. My family were dismayed and insisted that Henry accompany me. For several weeks we travelled through England and Scotland. It was a pleasant enough time, but the task I still had to do soured my heart and I could not begin work on it until Henry left me. He was a dear friend, but I could not share with him, or with any man, the dreadful secret of my endeavours.

Finally, Henry and I parted company as I headed for a quiet island off the coast of Scotland, there to create a bride for my monster. I felt sick as I started, but quickly recovered my enthusiasm and interest. I was a scientist once more, fascinated by my work of creation. The same frenzy that overcame me before occurred again. However, many weeks later, my doubts and fears returned. By then, just one more night's work was needed to bring the female creature lying in front of me to life.

That morning, I had received a letter from Henry asking me to join him in the Scottish town of Perth. Thinking of Henry, my father and Elizabeth jolted me out of my work fever. Only then, looking down at the face I had constructed, was I shocked by the creature's resemblance to Justine. How had that happened? For the first time during those weeks I questioned what I was doing.

To make a bride for the monster might rid me of him forever, but what if his bride turned out to be a murderer like him? And what if the hideous monster pair bred? My responsibilities as a scientist started to weigh heavily on me.

Suddenly I was disturbed by a scratching sound at the window. I looked up to see the creature anxiously awaiting his bride, a hideous leer on his face. He had somehow followed me to this lonely isle. One more look at his vile, distorted features was



enough for me. I reached for my surgeon's knife and plunged it deep into the female form that was lying on my work bench. The evil creature outside howled as I hacked and tore at the figure until my arms and body were covered in blood. Then he vanished.

The next day, I cleared up the awful mess that I had made and threw the remains of my second creation into the sea. Then I set sail from the island. A great storm kept my boat at sea for more than a week. When it finally ran aground, another ordeal awaited me. I was arrested and imprisoned for the murder of a man whose body had been found the day before.

I was left to rot in jail for an age before I learned who the dead man was – my best friend, Henry Clerval. Even before the police said that he had been strangled with unnatural force, I knew who his murderer was. I protested my innocence, but the terrible news had made me desperately weak, so I lacked the energy to argue sanely. Instead I ranted and raved, loudly claiming that the monster was responsible for the evil crime. But the authorities did not believe me. Luckily the judge was merciful and summoned my father, who convinced him of my innocence. At last I was set free.

The journey back to Geneva was grim. My exhausting work, my time in prison and the dreadful news of Henry's murder had all combined to make me very ill. So it was many months before I was well enough to marry my dear Elizabeth.

Our wedding day was magnificent. Our family and many friends were present and the entertainment was wonderful. Of course, the deaths of Justine, William and Henry were in our minds, but



Elizabeth's happiness and my new calmness helped cheer up my father and the guests.

When all the celebrations were over, my bride and I said farewell to the gathering and took a boat across Lake Geneva. The sunset was beautiful and I held Elizabeth close. I thought that perhaps, after all the terrible trials of the past, the nightmare was over at last. But I could not forget that the monster had taken its revenge on my poor, innocent friend. As my thoughts turned to Henry, I tearfully whispered,

"It should have been me."

"Quiet, my darling. Not on our wedding day," Elizabeth had gently chided. She was so full of love and peace that I dared not tell her my awful secret – that three people close to her had died because of me.

By the time we had crossed the lake, the

Underlined words are explained in WORD POWER.

sunset was over and clouds were building up in the evening sky. As we reached the inn where we were to spend our wedding night, the weather turned and gentle rain dappled Elizabeth's lace dress.

"It has been the most perfect of days," Elizabeth remarked. I took her hand. She was right. But as the weather became more stormy, I found that I could not rest. Instead I began to think about the monster's threat to be with me on my wedding night. So I decided to take a walk around the inn, just to clear my head.

The rain lashed the outside of the inn hard and I struggled through the deluge. At length, I completed my tour. Then, as I was heading back through the inn door, I heard Elizabeth screaming in terror.

Instantly I raced up to our wedding suite and flung the door open.

It was too late. The monster had already struck again. My darling Elizabeth lay on the bed with one arm outstretched and purple bruises ringing her neck like jewels. I ran screaming and raging out of the inn, brandishing my pistol. Just for a moment, I glimpsed the creature and fired a shot. It howled and I fired again, but it loped off into the shadows at great speed.

In a frenzy, with no time for grief, I raced home to my father. The servants told me that the terrible news had already reached him and he had been taken ill. I sat by his bedside willing him to recover, but he never opened his eyes again. Heartbroken by the demise of so many members of his family in a few short years, the poor man had simply lost the desire to live. He passed away peacefully.

Yet there could never be peace for me. I had lost almost everyone that I held dear. Lying beside the tombstones in my family's plot at the local graveyard, I wept bitter

tears of revenge. I vowed to pursue the evil beast that I had created for the rest of my life. I swore that I would rest only when it had been hunted down and destroyed. I have chased that infernal creature to the very ends of the Earth, Captain Walton, but still it torments me.

Victor Frankenstein finally grew so weak that I cannot with accuracy record his last words to me, Captain Robert Walton. What I can say is that they formed a plea for me to finish his work – to hunt down and kill the monster that he had created.

I let him drift off to sleep, hoping that he would regain his strength, and made my way up on to the deck. I needed the crisp, icy air to help me think clearly. I was deeply troubled by his story. It upset me greatly that this intelligent fellow had been taken to the brink of madness and death by the monster. I decided that he must already be insane, yet his story had seemed so real.

I stood there for some time until a crashing sound caused me to rush below decks. There in my room, leaning over Victor Frankenstein, was a huge brute of a man. I knew at once. The tale had indeed been true and now Frankenstein's monster was standing before me.

"I did not kill him," the monster said, looking up at me. His yellow eyes were spouting tears, which were rolling down his hideous, leathery face. I was taken aback by the creature's ugly appearance, but also surprised by the softness of his voice as he continued:

"He was my father and my mother and he treated me cruelly. He abandoned me when I was hardly born. He made me a female companion and then tore her apart in front of my eyes. I took revenge on the man I hated, but out there on the ice, I discovered that I still loved him as my creator. I came back to ask his forgiveness, but he was already dead when I reached your cabin."

Pitying this grief-stricken creature, I offered to take him back to civilisation. But he refused.

"Civilisation? With its sticks, its stones, its screams and its guns? No. I have done wrong, but I cannot repent. Frankenstein made me with a mind and a body, but without a soul. I am no more for this world. I have resolved to die out here on the ice."

With those words, the monster leaped out of the cabin window and on to a floating chunk of ice, which was carried away by the sea currents. No one heard or saw him ever again.

THE END

WORD POWER

leer – an ugly, sneering look

distorted – twisted out of a normal or usual shape

chided – scolded

dappled – marked with spots of two or more different colours

deluge – a fall of heavy rain; downpour

brandishing – waving in a threatening way

demise – death



NEXT ISSUE:

A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens



PARALLEL UNIVERSES

Think about what happens when you make a decision. You get out of bed in the morning and go to school. But what would happen if you decided not to get out of bed, or went to visit a friend instead? There are plenty of alternatives to an everyday decision, right?

Well, based on this simple theory comes a more baffling one: the idea that all of life's alternatives are taking place somewhere else – in parallel universes.

For instance, what if the comet that we believe hit Earth – and may have caused the Ice Age that wiped out prehistoric animals – had instead missed Earth and ploughed on through space? In that universe, prehistoric animals may have survived!

Many scientists no longer believe that it is possible to predict what will happen to our universe. Their recent discoveries suggest that there are hundreds of possible futures, and pasts, for planet Earth, each one as likely as the next.



▲ ALTERNATIVE EARTH
Could space warp around strong forces of gravity, creating a gateway that links two Earths existing in parallel universes?

▼ TRICK OF TIME
The backwards clock over a double Earth and Moon indicates that time could be running backwards in a parallel universe.



PARALLEL PROOF

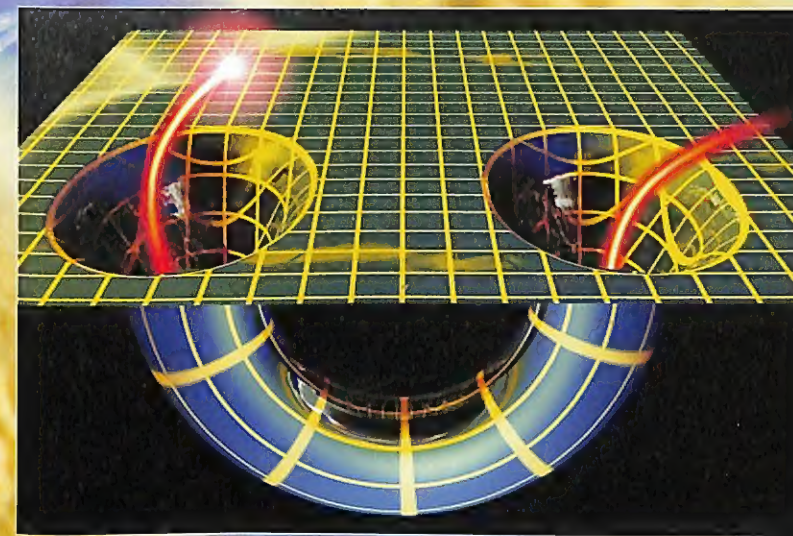
This revolutionary concept came about thanks to subatomic particles – atoms which are found in everything, including us! When scientists measured them, they moved. And when they tried to predict where they would move to, they discovered there were several possibilities. It was then that they concluded that, in reality, our world is based on only one of these possibilities – so the alternatives must be taking place somewhere else.

HOLE NEW UNIVERSE!

It is possible that some parallel universes may be similar to our own and others could be hugely different.

For instance, some experts have predicted that time could be running backwards in a parallel universe. Scientists think they might be on the way to finding out for sure. They have a theory that tunnels, called 'wormholes', link up black holes. It is only a matter of time, they reckon, before 'wormhole travel' takes us to parallel universes! Wormholes could be a way to travel through time and across our own universe at super-speed too, they suggest.

Before such a time arrives – it could be a while yet – psychic researchers claim they are busy spying on parallel universes from various 'hot-spots' on planet Earth!



▲ TUNNEL TRAVEL

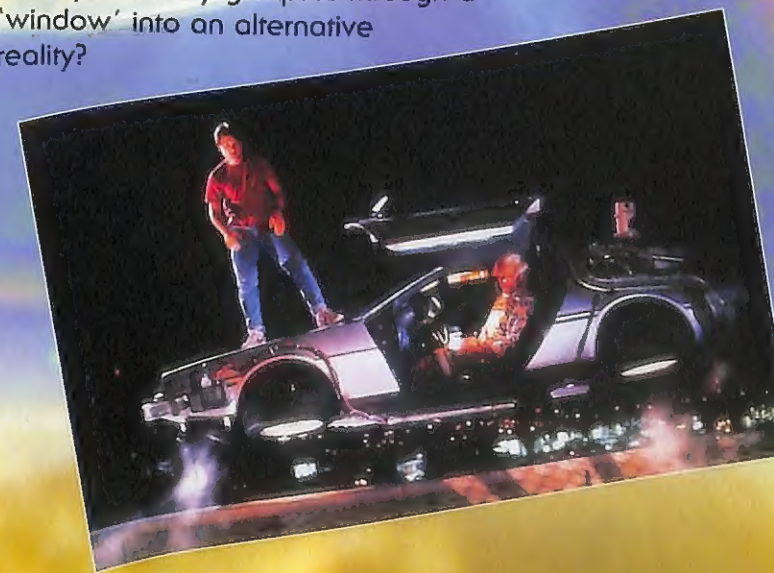
A computer graphic illustration of how a wormhole between two black holes may create a tunnel to travel through space and time.

BACK TO EARTH

Psychic investigators have claimed that if parallel universes exist they could be the answer to many unexplained mysteries. One suggestion is that areas around the world where paranormal activity is commonly reported could be the location of 'windows' through to a parallel universe.

For instance, an area of the Pennines, in northern England, has more reported alien abductions than anywhere else in Europe, as well as many UFO sightings and several out of place animal reports! Could this area be the location of a membrane between two parallel universes?

Is it possible that constant claims for the existence of bigfoot, yetis, and even the Loch Ness Monster can be explained by glimpses through a 'window' into an alternative reality?



WEIRD WAVES

Claims that some people are able to predict future events may also be linked to parallel universes. One theory is that all the possible futures exist from the beginning of time, that a probability wave from the future may travel back through time to meet a probability wave from the past – and where the two meet is the present.

In this case, psychics claim, it is possible that there are some special people in our universe who are able to tune in to the probability waves from the future and predict what is going to happen!



▲ SPACE TRAVEL OF TOMORROW

An artist's vision of the future shows a spacecraft hurtling out of a wormhole.

WHO KNOWS?

It is hard to know whether we will ever get to travel to, or even view, a parallel universe. At present, there is not even enough evidence to prove that parallel universes exist. But, in an uncertain world like our own, no one knows what the future holds – do they? What do you think?

◀ ANCIENT SIGNS

In 'Back to the Future' a teenager travels back in time and influences events so that he has a very different family life in the future.

CREEPY CATS PUZZLES

'B'-WARE!

These shocked cyclists are only too aware of the outsized, creepy cat! Now test your awareness and find at least ten different things in this scene beginning with 'B'.

FREAKY FACTS

Scary sightings of mysterious big cats, such as the powerful and predatory puma, have been reported in various parts of Britain. One of the most famous of these 'alien animals' is said to roam the West Country moors. It's known as the Beast of Bodmin.

VANISHING ACT!

Looks like that creepy cat will be gone again in a flash! Six other items are missing from the spooky scene. What are they?

CRAZY CATS

Spell out four well-known types of cat by correctly pairing up these shadow shapes and unscrambling their combined letters.

SEEM

BYB

SERP

FACT

One of world's most incredible journeys was performed by a cat named Smoky. He trekked right across America when his owners moved from New York to California. And it only took him nine months!

NINE LIVES!

That's how many it's said a cat has. Look at the numbers in the top wheel (right). Then calculate those in the corresponding segments in the wheel below, showing how each pair of numbers arrives at 9. One answer is given to get you started.



FELINE FACTS

Cats were sacred to the Ancient Egyptians, and anyone who killed a cat – even by accident – would pay with their life!

PHANTOM FACTS

In the 1940s, a couple rented a flat in Kent, in the south of England. The flat had a pantry with a stone floor—the ideal place to keep their pet cat's bowl. But not even the finest fish supper could persuade Puss to stay in the room. It hissed, spat and ran off. One day the couple discovered what was bothering their pet. Another cat lived in the room—only the mystery moggy was a semi-transparent ghost!

CAT-CH PHRASES

Work out three well-known expressions from the picture puzzles.

WEIRD WORDS

Three letters of each word shown here provide a clue to something they all have in common. Work out what it is, then pick the odd word out?

PHANTOM

MARTIN

STRAY

PURSUE

ASLEEP

FASCINATING FACTS

People have long been superstitious about cats. One belief is that the black cat is the witch's helpful 'familiar'.

ANSWERS

D: WAREL BROOK, BOTTLE, BACKPACK, BINGOULARS.
BONES, BRANCHES, BEAST (BIG CAT), BIRDS, BEARD, AND BIKES.
CRAZY CATS: (by/b/ro) TABOY: (seem/iso) SIAMISE:
(serp/oni) PERSIAN: (m/om) MANK.
NINE LIVES! see wheel
VANISHING ACT! The missing
Items are: A CAT'S EAR, CAT'S
EYE, BOY'S SOCK, GIRL'S SHOE.
SUNGLASSES LENS AND BIRD'S WING.
CAT-CH PHRASES 1. CAT NAP;
CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF; CAT AND MOUSE.
WEIRD WORDS: phon TOM; TID; AS LEE P; MART LAM;
STAY OIL contain boys' names, put sue contains
a girl's name.

